Topics of the Times

Everywhere Mr. Roosevelt goes the people act as if they had heard of him before.

Six night riders have been sentenced to be hanged. We predict a slump in night riding.

The old method of starting a saloon and building a town around it is going out of style in this country.

Now King Alfonso wants to try ski jumping. First thing you know that young man will rock the boat.

The courts have decided that women who wish to vote in Oklahoma must tell their ages. Mean old courts!

If the kidnapers don't cease their nefarious operations pretty soon people who have children will not dare to become rich.

A professor says lying results from intellectual laziness. Thought is was the natural result of a chronic desire to hold office.

The general verdict is that women's hats are not so bad, when you get used to them. It is the getting used to them that smites.

An exchange says the Panama Canal will "make islands of North and South America." Not quite. The locks will continue to hold them together.

If King Peter is disappointed over the way his boys have turned out, let him look at the old man. He never was the Santa Claus of a Sunday school.

Mr. Bok declares this season's millinery styles are beautiful and artistic. Mr. Bok is the editor of a publication for women, and he naturally aims to please.

A toad died the other day in the Bronx park at the comfortable age of 1,000 years. He remembered the time when Lief Ericson first began to discover Minnesota.

Spelling reformers say they are perfectly satisfied with progress already made. This means that they intend going right ahead with the cruel maiming of innocent words.

The Standard Oil Company is not a trust, according to the argument of one of its attorneys. He does not, however, declare that it is a spring poem or the long meter doxology.

A speaker recently said that the country boy is the hope of the American nation. That has always been the opinion of the lad himself, whence his feeling of superiority to the city bred person.

It appears that Caruso hurt his voice singing into talking machines, for which service he received large sums of money. He may have the satisfaction in future years of sitting down in front of a phonograph and hearing just how good a voice he had once.

Dr. Lyman Abbott defines "a good woman" by laying down eight rules of life, one of which is devoted to a declaration against tight shoes. This reminds us of the ancient Transvaal constitution which devoted one-fourteenth of its entire length to a prohibition of smoking in the court room.

Professor Albion Snell of the University of Chicago is quoted as saying that we are the most unhappy people on the face of the earth for three reasons: Because we are the most prosperous people; because we are the freest people, and because we are the most highly educated. And the president of the university might give one other reason.

Hard, fine grained, durable wood usually grows slowly. A most remarkable exception is the eucalyptus, and this it is which gives the tree its great value as a means of reforestation. It is said that it grows five times as rapidly as any other tree. Seedlings have been observed to make an average growth of six inches in height a day; and one tree in California has attained a height of one hundred and twenty-five feet and a diameter of thirty-six inches in nine years. The eucalyptus will not thrive where there are frosts, but in the South it promises to go a long way toward filling the place once occupied by other hardwoods, which have been greatly reduced by demands for furniture, carriage and cooperage stock.

"Lucky" Baldwin, the spectacular mining and racing man who died a few weeks ago, leaving a fortune of some $20,000,000, also left his sobriquet to more than one person who had served him in a professional capacity. He did not carry the appellation that came to him in his early days as a plunger to the grave. It descended to lawyers and doctors and others who may not have been heard from as yet. If Baldwin was lucky, what shall be said about the lawyers who claim some $600,000 of his wealth, and of the doctor who attended the deceased during the last twenty-nine days of his life and has put in a bill for an even $100,000, doubling his original charge when he learned, possibly, how the lawyers had measured their services? Luck that results from risk, such as characterized the life of Baldwin, is one thing, and luck that carries no risk, as it would be in the case of these lawyers and the doctor, is another. Luck without attendant risk might be said to be the luckiest kind of luck. In short, it's mighty lucky for some folks that there are persons with the business or the gambling capacity for piling up great fortunes which they cannot take with them when they leave this vale of tears. The luckiest fellow of all, as a good part of the world views things, is the one who gets the last whack at some other fellow's accumulations and who is alive when the other is dead.

In many, if not in all the States there are laws providing penalties for kidnaping, varying in severity from death to imprisonment in the county jail for one year. There is general agreement in all the States that no crime is more reprehensible than that of the person who steals a child from its parents and holds it for ransom under threat of torture if the money demanded is not paid. Other crimes against the person may be, and frequently are, due to ungovernable passion; but the stealing of children for such a purpose is a deliberate procedure, planned to take advantage of the natural affection which parents have for their children. It is in its essence a crime against nature, and deserves to be classed with all those unnatural deeds for which the laws provide severe penalties. Yet, as already indicated, there is one State, Idaho, in which the minimum penalty is only one year of imprisonment in the county jail. The maximum is ten years' imprisonment. In Pennsylvania, the scene of the most recent kidnaping case, the maximum penalty is solitary imprisonment for life. In Alabama, Delaware and Illinois the courts have power to sentence kidnapers to death, particularly when the person kidnaped is held for ransom. Distinction is made in the laws of some of the States between kidnaping children and adults, and between holding for ransom and for other purposes. Such distinctions are of course necessary to cover the different degrees of the crime. The general tendency of recent years has been toward the infliction of increasingly heavy penalties upon stealers of children. No sooner had the news of the abduction of the Pennsylvania boy spread abroad than bills were introduced in the Legislatures of several States raising the maximum penalty for the crime, and such a proposition was made in Congress to cover the District of Columbia and the Territories.

DOCTORS IN THE SCHOOLS.

Medical Inspection Spreads Here, America Still Behind Europe.

In the United States, Boston seems to be entitled to the credit of establishing the first regular system of medical inspection of schools. This was done in 1894; but two years before this the sanitary inspector of New York had appointed a medical inspector of schools, who was probably the first medical officer of the public schools appointed in this country.

In 1894 50 physicians were selected by the Board of Health to inspect the public schools of Boston. In 1895 nine such inspectors were appointed in Chicago. In 1897 the Board of Health at New York appointed 134 medical inspectors for the public schools, with a chief, at a salary of $2,500 a year.

In 1898 the bureau of health in Philadelphia passed a resolution directing that each of the 15 assistant medical inspectors shall visit one public school in his district each day, inspecting it according to the methods employed in Boston, New York and Chicago. Since 1894 medical inspection of schools has been largely adopted throughout the United States, and in some states has developed from mere inspection for detecting contagious diseases to systems calling for the most thorough physical examinations. Only four general State laws providing for or allowing medical inspections of schools have been passed, says the Medical Record. There is, so far as can be ascertained, some form of medical inspection of schools in vogue at present in 70 cities in the United States outside of Massachusetts, but the United States is still behind Germany, and, for that matter, a number of foreign countries, in this important movement.—New York Sun.

Jerry.

The cassowary is a bird
That's hard to capture, very,
Folks hunting for her plumes have made
The cassowary wary.
—Kansas City Times.

Nearest His Heart.

After the Civil war was over General Sherman loved to talk about it and about "his boys," as he used to call the men who had served under him, and who came to see him from all parts of the country. Toward the close of his days this gave rise to a pathetically human incident which the American Magazine recently printed.

Once, while the late Augustus Saint-Gaudens was modeling a figure of Sherman, Robert Louis Stevenson visited New York. Stevenson had a passion for the study of war. He knew more about fighting than most fighting men, and was especially interested in the Civil war, and in Sherman's spectacular campaign in Georgia.

He asked Saint-Gaudens to introduce him to the general, and the next day the sculptor told Sherman that Stevenson wanted to meet him.

"Who is he?" asked Sherman, "one of my boys?"

"No," said Gaudens, "he's the great writer—Stevenson."

"Never heard of him," said Sherman. "What did he write?"

"Why, he wrote 'Treasure Island' and 'Kidnaped' and 'David Balfour'—"

"Don't know them," said the general.

"And he wrote 'Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde.'"

"That's a good play. I saw Dick Mansfield play it. Well, fetch him along."

Saint-Gaudens, the kindest and tenderest creature that ever lived, would never think of wounding Stevenson's sensitive soul by telling him what Sherman had said.

"The general wants you to come around to-morrow," said he to the author.

"Does he really want to see me?" Stevenson asked.

"Of course, he does," said Saint-Gaudens. "Want to see you? Why you should have seen his face when I told him you were coming."

They went to the studio the next day. When Sherman arrived, Saint-Gaudens came forward most impressively and laying great stress on the author's name, said:

"General Sherman, this is Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson."

"Ah, how do you do, Mr. Stevenson?" said the general. "Glad to meet you! One of my boys?"

Out in the Rain.

The Indian fairly revels in rain, declares G. W. James in his book, "What the White Race May Learn from the Indian." Indian women no more mind the rain than they do that the sun should shine or the wind blow, and as for any evil effect from the wet, there are no signs of it.

In the first place, they have no fear of the rain. It is not constantly instilled into their minds from childhood that "they mustn't get wet, or they'll take cold." This has something to do with it.

In the second place, they move about with natural activity in the rain as at other times. This keeps the blood circulating and prevents any lowering of the temperature of the body.

In the third place, their general outdoor life gives them such a robustness that if there is any tax upon the system it is fully ready to meet it.

Everything in nature loves to be out in the rain, and upon human beings its effects are beneficial, provided they value health and vigor more than they mind a little discomfort in the bedraggiement of their clothes.

First Orange Trees of Europe.

At a time when tiny orange trees are to be seen as table decorations, and oranges innumerable are for sale, it is not inappropriate to trace the introduction of the fruit into Europe. According to a Paris contemporary, says the London Globe, after its introduction into Europe from China, a Carthaginian conceived the idea of grafting the yellow mandarin orange upon the grenadier, with the result that we have the blood orange. Jean de Castro introduced the orange from the West Indies to Portugal, and the first attempt to cultivate it was made by the Constable de Bourbon; but after this revolt Francis I. continued the experiments. At the time Louis XIV. visited Toulon the Chevalier Paul, in compliment to the king, placed some preserved oranges on trees in the orangery. Ladies in the routine, it is added, were under the impression that these oranges grew sugared.

A Mean Landlord.

Mrs. Upton (to lady caller)—I do think we've got the meanest, most penurious and grasping old Shylock of a landlord that ever lived.

Caller—Why do you remain here, then? Why not try some other place if you don't like the landlord?

Mrs. Uptom—That's just it! He's that mean he won't let us get far enough behind with the rent so it is not really any object to us to move.—Pick-Me-Up.

Crushing Sarcasm.

Mr. Hewligus—Fourteen dollars, madam, is an outrageous price to pay for a hat!

Mrs. Hewligus—If I should buy the planet Saturn for a hat you'd think I oughtn't to pay more than 39 cents for it.

Feather Duster a Germ Spreader.

Th giant "tickler" known to the housewife as the feather duster has won the enmity of the student of tuberculosis. The feather duster as a creator of miniature whirlwinds, is not to be despised. Like its natural prototype, the fruit of its labors is likely to be much ado about nothing, or worse. Its performances are never of any actual value, for the dust rises from one place only to settle down in another. In the case of the germs of tuberculosis which have previously been scattered by some thoughtless spitter afflicted with the white plague there is always a possibility that they may be included in the dust stirred up by the industrious duster. Therefore, the fighter against the spread of tuberculosis places a ban on the feather duster and proclaims that the proper way to sweep and to dust is to use moisture on the floor and a damp cloth on walls and furniture.

"Oh, well, there are more important preventive measures than discouraging the use of the feather dusters," perhaps someone exclaims, forgetting that some of the other remedies, such as better living conditions are harder to obtain, and that little details count when the active and persistent disease germ is to be opposed. It is difficult to convince persons whose rule for the acceptance of anything is "Seeing is believing," that germs are very real, although unseen and more dangerous than some elephants.

The Smooth Way.

In the last generation Tyler Cobb, Esq., was a well known citizen of North Bridgewater—now Brockton—Massachusetts. He was famous throughout Plymouth County, says a contributor to the Boston Herald, for his witty retorts and dry humor.

Never having taken a sea trip, Mr. Cobb one day conceived the idea of making a voyage to New York. Accordingly he sailed from Boston in a small schooner.

The first day out a storm was encountered and Mr. Cobb became violently sick, but after several hours he mustered up courage and strength to look out upon the troubled waters.

As he looked from the side of the little ship up the trough of the sea, it seemed very smooth to him. The captain's cutting of the waves was "senseless," he told himself.

But as this mad steering continued, the unhappy passenger finally crawled out, on hand and knees to where the captain stood at the wheel, and raising his voice above the din of waves and wind shouted:

"Man, man, keep in the ruts, keep in thtsure .(-sB cmfwyp cmfwyp mfw in the ruts!"

Lee at Appomattox.

Men who saw the defeated general when he came forth from the chamber where he had signed the articles of capitulation say that he paused a moment as his eyes rested sonce more on the Virginia hills; smote his hands together as though in some excess of inward agony, then mounted his gray horse, Traveler, and rode calmly away.

If that was the very Gethsemane of his trials, yet he must have had then one moment of supreme, if chastened, joy. As he rode quietly down the lane leading from the scene of capitulation, he passed into view of his men—of such as remained of them. The news of the surrender had got abroad and they were waiting, grief-stricken and dejected, upon the hillsides, when they caught sight of their commander on the gray horse. Then, ensued one of the most notable scenes of the history of the war. In an instant they were about him, kissing his hand, his boots, his saddle, weeping; cheering him amid their tears; shouting his name to the very skies. He said: "Men, we have fought through the war together; I have done my best for you; my heart is too full to say more."—From Robert E. Lee, the Southerner," by Thomas Nelson Page.

A Victim.

Horace Bixey, the doyen of Mississippi pilots, is still at the wheel at 82. To him Mark Twain served his apprenticeship. A Vicksburg reporter asked Mr. Bixey a recipe for a hale old age.

"Temperance, young man," the pilot replied. "Intemperance is what kills us off. Oh, the victims," he said, in his whimsical way, "the sad victims of intemperance I have seen!

"Once, I remember, a passenger of ours fell overboard. We fished him out with a boathook after he had been soaking on the bottom half an hour or so. We laid him limp and sopping on the deck, and a steward ran for the whisky bottle. As I pried the man's mouth open to pour some whisky down his throat, his lips moved. A kind of murmur came from them. I put my ear down close to listen, and I heard the half-drowned wretch say:

"'Roll me on a bar'l fust to get some o' this water out. It'll weaken the licker."

Another Horror.

"Speakin' about this 'ere tariff," said the man with the bulbous nose, "it makes all the difference in the world whose socks is gored."

SIX TOES TO A FOOT.

Farming Community Remarkable for General Freak of Nature.

On the line between Lincoln and Sagadahoc counties is a settlement of thrifty farming folks who have a peculiarity which is but little known outside, says a Bangor (Me.) correspondent of the New York Herald. It is not visible and a stranger might go there year in and year out without ever discovering that they were any different from ordinary persons in a farming community. They are peculiar for the number of people in the settlement who have six toes on each foot, one more than they really ought to have and one more on each foot than they are entitled to.

The six-toe belt lies partly in the town of Dresden in Lincoln County and partly in Woolwich in Sagadahoc County. Just how many people there are who have more than their share of toes in that vicinity would be hard to say, but there is quite a number, and the way in which they came by them is a mystery in the first place, although there are a number of traditions as to how it happened.

Like many country districts, the people have been born, brought up, settled on farms in the vicinity and married into each other's families until time has produced a number of six-toed people in a comparatively small community.

The settlement is an ordinary country place, in which is a store or two, a postoffice and a grange hall which serves as a meeting place for all social occasions which are held in the homes of the people of the vicinity.

Rather than being a benefit to them, the extra toe is somewhat of an affliction in a number of ways, especially in getting shoes to fit them, for no shoemaker has yet ventured to manufacture a special line of boots for six-toed persons. So much of a bother has this been to some of the people that they have submitted to surgical treatment and had the offensive sixth member removed, that they might wear shoes much the same as others.

At a time, several years ago, when it was all the rage to wear the extreme pointed toed shoes these people were in a sorry plight. To crowd six toes into a shoe with a capacity for three, but in which vain man often crowded five, was too much for these people. They were fairly ostracized from being in the fashionable swim by the freak of nature which put them out of the running. Being possessed of sound sense they submitted to the inevitable and waited until their five-toed brethren had become crippled by the freak styles and then they were in the swim again with broad-toed shoes.

How it happened that this colony of six-toed people settled in this place is hard to explain. Tradition has it that some man of several generations ago settled in that vicinity, and while at work in the woods split a toe with an ax, and, instead of adhering, the two parts separated and in the course of time as the generations passed the sixth toe made its appearance in a more perfect form. This theory does not find many ready believers among the people there, who have given up accounting for it.

The sixth toe is an offshoot from the little toe of the ordinary foot. It is perfect in shape, although it is not always in alignment with the other five toes of the foot. For this reason it is troublesome, and becomes more so as the people advance in years.

Tricked of the Time.

A Philadelphia lawyer who spends most of his time at his country estate employs a sturdy Irish gardener whose one desire in life is to live until the banner of freedom is unfurled over Ireland.

One evening the lawyer strolled through the grounds of his place and stopped to have a chat with the gardener.

"Michael, do you know that while we are here enjoying the beautiful twilight it is dark midnight in Ireland?" he asked.

"Faith, an' Oi'm not surprised," replied the gardener. "Ireland niver got justice yit."—Judge.

Contagious.

Poetry is catching. A playwright recently told a story of rehearsing "Twelfth Night" for an open air performance, in a garden which was overlooked by a rising brick edifice. As the amateurs recited their lines, the workmen continued their labors. The Washington Star prints the tale.

One afternoon, during a silent pause in our rehearsal, we heard a voice from the building operation saying gravely:

"I prithee, malapert, pass me yonder brick."

Reminded Him.

Little Boy (meddling with has father's documents)—Papa, this letter from Mr. Muntoburn has a postscript, 'B. T. L. What does that——

Absent-Minded Statesman—Give me that letter, son!

(Hastily burns it.)—Chicago Tribune.

The ranks of the miners and charcoal burners are less affected by consumption than any other occupation.